

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04  
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R 231549Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4376  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2996

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT MORG LE  
SUBJ: CALL BY KARIM PAKRADOUNI

REF: (A) BEIRUT 2879, (B) BEIRUT 2606

1. SUMMARY: PHALANGE POLITBURO MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI IS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT REESTABLISHMENT OF LEBANESE ARMY, BELIEVES THAT SARKIS MUST TAKE WHATEVER DRASTIC STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO THIS END, PERHAPS EVEN CREATING A POLITICAL CABINET SIMPLY TO GAIN THE NECESSARY POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARMY. END SUMMARY.

2. PAKRADOUNI CALLED ON ME AT MY OFFICE JUNE 21, WHERE I MET HIM FOR FIRST TIME.

3. CRITICAL OF THE ARMY. PAKRADOUNI SAID HE PERCEIVED NO SIGNS OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS REESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL LEBANESE ARMY. HE FELT THAT ARMY COMMANDER BRIGADIER GENERAL KHOURY SIMPLY LACKED THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP. HE WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE SOME OF KHOURY'S IDEAS, PARTICULARLY WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE THE LATTER'S  
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EMPHASIS ON CREATING CASERNES RATHER THAN OPERATIONAL MILITARY UNITS. (COMMENT: PAKRADOUNI SEEMED TO NOT BE FULLY AWARE OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ARMY REESTABLISHMENT, AS REPORTED BY OUR DATT.) IN PAKRADOUNI'S VIEW, THE IMPORTANT THING IN LEBANON IS NOT TO HAVE A BIG ARMY WHICH CAN OCCUPY THE WHOLE COUNTRY, AS DO THE SYRIANS AT PRESENT, BUT RATHER TO HAVE A HIGHLY MOBILE STRIKE FORCE WHICH CAN INTERVENE WITH EFFEC-

TIVENESS IN LOCAL SITUATIONS.

4. THE PARTIES AND THE ARMY. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT THE POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE BECHIR GEMAYEL WING OF HIS OWN PHALANGE PARTY, SIMPLY REFUSED TO SUPPORT THE ARMY. PROGRESS WAS THEREFORE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT, EVEN IF GENERAL KHOURY SHOULD TRY TO BASE THE NEW ARMY ON THE NEUTRALISTS. FOR EACH AND EVERY APPOINTMENT, BECHIR GEMAYEL OR SOME OTHER POLITICAL FIGURE RAISED A HOST OF OBJECTIONS. PAKRADOUNI FELT THAT KHOURY HAD A TENDENCY TO COMPROMISE TOO MUCH WITH THESE EXTRANEIOUS POLITICAL INTERESTS, WHICH IN THE LONG RUN WOULD CREATE NOT A NATIONAL ARMY BUT A HODGE-PODGE OF POLITICAL INTERESTS. PAKRADOUNI FELT THAT THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA WAS FOR PRESIDENT SARKIS TO TAKE SOME MAJOR STEPS TO IMPOSE THE PRESENCE OF THE LEBANESE STATE. THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CREATING AN ARMY, IN PAKRADOUNI'S VIEW, WOULD EVEN JUSTIFY ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLITICAL CABINET SIMPLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES.

5. THE ABSENCE OF THE STATE. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT THE AVERAGE LEBANESE CITIZEN WAS NOT TRULY AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE LEBANESE STATE, AND WAS CERTAINLY NOT IN COMMUNICATION WITH IT. THE TWO WAYS IN WHICH THE COMMON CITIZEN NORMALLY FEELS THE PRESENCE OF THE STATE, HE NOTED IRONICALLY, WERE THROUGH THE POLICE AND TAXES. NO PERSONAL TAXES WERE BEING

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COLLECTED. MORE AND MORE LEBANESE GENDARMES WERE APPEARING ON THE STREETS, BUT IN VERY SMALL NUMBERS AND WITHOUT ANY FANFARE. PAKRADOUNI WOULD HAVE THE GOVERNMENT DRAMATICALLY ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS OR THAT MILITARY OR POLICE UNIT, IN DECENT UNIFORMS, AND SAY THAT IT REPLACED THESE OR THOSE ASF UNITS IN A SPECIFIC TASK, OR IN SECURING A SPECIFIC AREA OF THE CITY. PRESIDENT SARKIS, HE SAID, DOES NOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE LEBANESE BODY POLITIC. VERY FEW PEOPLE IN LEBANON, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE AWARE OF THE EXTENT OF LEBANON'S PROBLEMS CONCERNING SOUTH LEBANON, OR THE U.S. ROLE IN IT.

6. BECHIR IN A TIGHT POSITION. PAKRADOUNI DESCRIBED BECHIR GEMAYEL'S CURRENT POSITION AS EXCEEDINGLY AWKWARD. HE HAD SPOKEN TOO UNEQUIVOCALLY PUBLICLY ON TOO MANY SUBJECTS. HE WAS AT ODDS WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS, WITH THE PHALANGE POLITBURO, AND--PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT--WITH THE SYRIANS.

7. SIGNS OF DISILLUSION. PAKRADOUNI SAID THERE WERE SOME DISTURBING SIGNS THAT THE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM OF RECENT MONTHS IN LEBANON WAS BEGINNING TO COME APART. CITIZENS WERE IN CONTACT NOT WITH THE STATE, BUT WITH THEIR VARIOUS POLITICAL GROUPINGS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE WERE NOW

RENEWED SIGNS OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE POLITICS  
WITH MONEY, PARTICULARLY REGULAR POLITICAL STIPENDS TO VARIOUS  
LEFTIST GROUPS FROM IRAQ AND LIBYA.

8. CHRISTIAN-DRUZE PEACE IN THE CHOUF. I ASKED PAKRADOUNI  
SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE THOUGHT COULD BE DONE TO EFFECT A  
RAPPROCHEMENT OF THE CHRISTIANS AND DRUZE IN THE CHOUF IN THE  
AFTERMATH OF THE ASSASSINATION OF KAMAL JUMBLATT AND DRUZE  
REVENGE KILLINGS OF CHRISTIANS, TELLING HIM THAT I HAD BEEN  
ASKED SPECIFICALLY BY WALID JUMBLATT WHAT COULD BE DONE TO  
END THE FEUD (REFTEL A). PAKRADOUNI THOUGHT THAT THE KEY  
CONNECTION FOR SUCH A RAPPROCHEMENT WOULD BE BETWEEN WALID  
HIMSELF AND DANY CHAMOUN. THE CHOUF CHRISTIANS, AFTER ALL,  
WERE CHAMOUNISTS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE AGREED WITH MY  
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OBSERVATION THAT IT WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO PROMOTE  
SUCH A RAPPROCHEMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL  
FOR US TO TALK TO CAMILLE CHAMOUN.

9. POLITICAL REFORMS. I ASKED PAKRADOUNI WHAT WERE THE  
PROSPECTS OF POLITICAL REFORM, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF  
RECENT RENEWED TALK ABOUT THE "CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT"  
OF JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1976. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT THERE WERE  
A NUMBER OF IDEAS BEING DISCUSSED IN A NUMBER OF CIRCLES  
BASED ON THIS DOCUMENT, INCLUDING CREATION OF A SENATE (WE  
AGREED IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO FIND A PARKING LOT FOR  
LEBANON'S GERIATRIC POLITICIANS). HE ALSO THOUGHT THE  
GOVERNMENT MIGHT TAKE SOME STEPS SOON TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE  
DECENTRALIZATION. HE SAID THAT SARKIS HAD SOME FAIRLY PRECISE  
IDEAS IN THIS RESPECT BUT WAS UNSURE ABOUT TIMING.  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF A REFORM PLAN COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT.  
(PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF PROTOCOL KHALIL HADDAD CONFIRMED TO AN  
EMBASSY OFFICER JUNE 20 VIEW THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS NOT  
PLANNING ANY IMPORTANT POLITICAL MOVES THIS MONTH.) PAKRA-  
DOUNI HARKENED BACK TO THE QUESTION OF THE ARMY, OPINING THAT  
WITHOUT A STRONG PRESENCE OF THE STATE, ATTEMPTS AT POLITICAL  
REFORM IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT MIGHT SIMPLY CREATE NEW PROB-  
LEMS AND NO SOLUTIONS.

10. COMMENT: PAKRADOUNI SOUNDED MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN ON  
HIS EARLIER ENCOUNTERS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PINT, MORG, LE, (PAKRADOUNI, KARIM)  
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**Type:** TE  
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